

a community called ...

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KIND REPROOF WELL TAKEN.

SOME years ago, in a village in the county of Gloucester, the Wesleyan ministers regularly preached in the house of a poor man named John H. This procedure attracted the notice, and excited the serious displeasure, of a gentleman in the neighborhood; who, in addition to his ministerial character, sustained the office of magistrate. So greatly was he annoyed as to send the following document to this modern Obed-Edom, who counted it a special honor to have his house opened for the reception of the ark :

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“Mr. H. is informed by this note that, unless the preaching at his house be immediately discontinued, information shall be laid, and the penalty enforced.”

In great distress, Mr. H. went to relate his troubles to the superintendent of the circuit, who immediately dispatched the following letter to the gentleman:

“REV. SIR: You are hereby informed that the preaching at the dwelling-house of John H. will not be immediately stopped, and you are at perfect liberty to give information, and enforce the penalty.

“I am very sorry, sir, that you should have given yourself the least trouble in order to prevent the dissemination of the Gospel of peace. As a minister of that Gospel, should you not rejoice, sir, to hear that through its proclamation (albeit the preachers follow not with you) the drunkard has become sober, the swearer has ceased to blaspheme, the liar speaks the truth, the passionate learn in patience to possess their soul, savage husbands

become affectionate and kind, and brutish parents are training up their rising charge in the fear of God? I have had much pleasure, sir, in hearing you spoken of as a zealous and faithful minister of the Gospel, and wish you much success in your labors. Highly shall I be delighted, when our short span of life is ended, to see your triumphant crown sparkling with many bright jewels—ransomed souls won to the Redeemer by your preaching of his cross. Go on, favored servant of the Lord; and as we are soldiers of King Jesus, let us ‘fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold of eternal life.’ You, sir, fill an exalted station in the ranks: allow me at least to act the part of a rifleman, and strive to bring up those whom you leave behind. In my correspondence with other Christians ministers I am accustomed to recommend for their perusal the ‘Rev. John Wesley’s Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion.’ I shall be glad to receive a line from you at any time, and remain,

“Yours respectfully, H. B.”

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The person addressed was highly pleased with the above letter, and it led to a conversation on the subject with a neighboring Esquire, who took an early opportunity of hearing the writer. He was deeply affected under the word preached, and kindly invited the minister to dine with him the same day. Mr. B. was much grieved to perceive the Sabbath-breaking which was carried on at considerable extent in the gentleman's establishment, and saw it his duty to make some remarks thereon. It was at the sacrifice of much personal feeling thus to reprove one who had shown him marked respect and kindness; but the minister felt that he was there, not as a private individual, but as an ambassador for Christ, a witness for his Master, and that silence on his part would be connivance at iniquity. The injunction, "Thou shalt not suffer sin upon thy neighbor," sounded in his ears; and, lifting up his heart to God for divine direction and blessing, he faithfully, yet with much kindness both of spirit and manner, reproved the gentleman for the dese-

eration of the Lord's day which prevailed in his house. The reproof was well received, and ultimately led to the conversion of the individual to whom it was administered. 'Squire B. was a man of good judgment, and was much esteemed by a large circle of friends. But having resolved to be on the Lord's side, he at once broke off all connection with the workers of iniquity, and rather reproved them. He came out from among the ungodly, and was separate, no longer touching the unclean thing. He at once united himself with the Wesleyan Methodist Society, and was soon called to sustain the offices of class-leader and local preacher. In the great missionary cause he felt a lively interest.

His constitution was exceedingly delicate, and for the benefit of his health he went to reside at Aberystwith, in Wales; but there he gradually declined; his mortal life ended; and being made more than conqueror through Him who had loved him, he was numbered with the triumphant spirits before the throne; permitted to take part in celestial

anthems, and join in the worship of the upper sanctuary.

Being visited a short time before his death by one of the Welsh ministers, he stated that what, through the abundant mercy of God, led to his conversion, was the kind reproof for Sabbath-breaking mentioned above. "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." James v, 19, 20.

On opening his will, the executors found that he had left four hundred pounds toward the erection of a Wesleyan chapel, on any site within a mile of his residence which the trustees should deem most eligible—with directions that a Sabbath-school should be connected therewith. The chapel was speedily erected, and the minister who wrote the letter before mentioned was honored with an invitation to take part in the opening services. He preached in the new sanctuary, morning and evening, to the pleasure and profit of a vast

concourse of people, who were led to exclaim, "What hath God wrought!" To Mr. B. himself it was a day of high and holy enjoyment; and beholding how the pleasure of the Lord had prospered in his hands, he "thanked God, and took courage."

"Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" We are not able fully to calculate the benefits which, under God, flowed from that one kind reproof; but the day shall declare them. We know not yet how many were led to the Saviour through Squire B.'s personal efforts, after himself, his talents, his influence, and his property had all been consecrated to Christ. We cannot tell how many wandering feet he was permitted to "guide into the way of peace;" nor to how many of his fellow-Christians he proved a helper of their faith and joy. Nor can we declare how rich a blessing will rest upon that little sanctuary; of how many souls it will be said, "They were born there." Within its walls the glorious Gospel of the blessed God is faithfully published; and of one thing we are well assured

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—the word of the Lord shall prosper, it shall not return void, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

“The children of God pass through the world like beneficent clouds, and even their words are not lost. How blissful will at length be their astonishment when the Lord shall finally lift the vail from their earthly course, show them what beautiful crops, of which they themselves were ignorant, sprang up in silent concealment under the dew of his grace, from the germs of their words and actions upon earth! They will then see that they have not lived in vain, even as respects others; and their works shall remain. No stream of time shall carry them away: they follow them into futurity.”

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TRACT DEPARTMENT.